



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Eastern Partnership: promoting stronger economies and societies for the EU's six Eastern Partners**

Today in Vienna, the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union together with the European Commission will host the 5<sup>th</sup> Eastern Partnership Business Forum followed by the Eastern Partnership's Annual Conference on 7 December. The two events will bring together high level representatives from the EU and the six Eastern Partners - [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Georgia](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#) to help promote **socio-economic development** across the region.

EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn** ahead of his participation said: *"The Eastern Partnership Business Forum and Annual Conference are a great opportunity to highlight our joint achievements to date in the framework of the Eastern Partnership and its 20 Deliverables for 2020. Building on this, the EU will drive forward reforms to ensure the right business environment for small and medium-sized enterprises and create further opportunities for young people to study, work, participate fully in society."*

The events will serve as a platform to discuss how to further promote stronger economies and societies in order to help increase prosperity and living standards of citizens and thereby lead to greater stability of the region. Panel discussions will also focus on how to further SMEs and to attract foreign direct investment, creating and sustaining job opportunities in Partner countries, and to fostering skills development in line with market demands.

The two events will take place in advance of next year's 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership and will gather almost 500 participants, including government stakeholders, representatives of EU institutions, international financial institutions, Members of European Parliament, as well as non-governmental representatives from think tanks, civil society, businesses, youth, and academia.

### **Background:**

Launched in 2009 as a joint policy initiative, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU), its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Within this framework, all partners agreed to deliver tangible benefits to the daily lives of their citizens by focusing on achieving [20 Deliverables for 2020](#).

Under the EU4Business initiative, the European Union provides access to finance, supports exports to new markets and offers expertise to small businesses in all six partner countries. Since 2009, the EU has contributed €348 million, supporting 70,000 enterprises, triggering €1.96 billion worth of loans to companies, and creating 28,000 new jobs.

Improving prospects for youth is at the heart of the European Union's cooperation within the Eastern Partnership. The European Union is fostering leadership and entrepreneurship skills of around 23,000 people; enabling over 80,000 young people, youth workers, students and academic staff to benefit from exchange opportunities under the Erasmus+ programme; and launched the Eastern Partnership European School

### **For More Information**

[Eastern Partnership: 20 Deliverables for 2020](#)

[EU Support to Businesses in the Eastern Partnership](#)

[EU Support to Youth in the Eastern Partnership](#)